

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE

by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin

We often say, "Try describing an elephant to a blind man;" with this we mean that it is nearly impossible to explain what something is to someone who has no reference to the item involved. I come across this difficulty almost daily, and it is indeed a complicated task. As a Rav in a community that is far from the *heimishe* heartlands, I am always trying to explain what it is that Torah Jews feel in their daily lives.

To the uninitiated, the *heimishe* household seems as though it is placed somewhere to the west of Mars. To live a life without all the rubbish that clutters up the secular world seems impossible; and some think that by depriving our young of television we are probably guilty of some sort of child abuse. Describing a Yom Tov in the presence of a Rebbe, or the simcha of a *chareidi* wedding sounds so strange, so far fetched. This wall of ignorance stands in the way of bringing so many closer to Hashem; they just have no idea what you are talking about.

In my small little corner of the world I learned that the only way to dissolve these walls of separation is to live a Torah life full throttle, yet with a friendliness that allows the blind man to at least touch the elephants tusk. If you can get past the first hurdle of total misunderstanding, then little by little Torah concepts can be introduced.

Some twenty years ago when I first came to my community some felt that I would soon be on the next flight out. Instead we stayed and shared, and now the community accepts and even feels proud of much that has changed. Long coats, *sheitlach*, glatt kosher food, *chalav Yisrael*, all these concepts were foreign, now they belong on the lips of a growing number of community members, and all without coercion or argument. Something else, a small nuance perhaps, but very indicative of my point, I have many pictures of *Gedolim* hanging in my house and in my office in shul. There was a time when people would look upon these holy faces and not even register a spark of interest. Today it is different; I am now asked, "Who is that Rabbi?" "Which Rebbe was he?" There is an understanding that these *Gedolim* were spiritual giants, human angels that kept *Yiddishkeit* alive. They didn't go to some fancy university, yet, they were special and above all that is mundane.

In the secular swamp where most live today, the creation of such sensitivity has enormous impact. The Torah Yid takes for granted that his Rebbe or Rosh Yeshiva stands head and shoulders above anyone else. We love the sight of thousands of Yidden going to a *Rabbonishe chasina*, and we feel a shiver of spiritual delight when we hear a bit of Torah from a tzaddik. To the secular Jew this is so unfamiliar, and yet it is part of his birthright.

Whenever we have had a *simcha* in the family my community has participated fully. They admire the mechtiza at the dinner; they feel joyous whilst dancing separated from their spouses, and when they watch a *chuppa* where generations stand with *shtreimlach* and tears, they too became part of the entirety that is *Klal Yisrael*.

All this is nothing strange if you but think for a moment. Our society today is driven by consumer secularism. The enemies of Torah life are not religious in nature but instead totally cut off from religious values. Our greatest enemies are those of ignorance and unrestrained materialism. These Yidden haven't turned from the Torah, they never knew it was there in the first place. The values that many are brought up with are diametrically opposed to all that the Torah stands for. It is a hodgepodge of folk tales that make up what Jewishness is to the many masses of our brethren. If we allow them to glimpse at the Torah reality, then they will feel the *pintele* that is in their hearts, and the rest will come in time.

Our enemies have maligned our heritage so badly that the average secular Jew has no frame of reference to allow him to see the truth. However every heimishe Yid can create such a reference, by acting and being a friendly, brotherly, Torah soul mate to these lost ones.

This kapitel in Tehillim tells of how the uniqueness of Klal Yisrael perseveres and how we can create the ambience so that all will soon share in the simcha of the Moshiach's coming.

Shir Hamaalos Habotchim BaHashem ... "A Song of Ascents. Those who trust in Hashem are as Mount Zion which cannot be moved, and abides forever."

Rav Shamshon Refael Hirsch explains this passage by saying that after the destruction of the physical sign of Hashem's presence, the Temple, its people, Bnei Yisrael, became a living Mount Zion, glorifying Hashem's presence in this world. Even when we are moved physically from pillar to post, we are still true to Hashem, and are immovable when it comes to His Torah. When Yidden remain true, then those around them can see this truth and be drawn to it. The *chareidishe* community today, although made to bob about in the sea of disbelief, is that Mount Zion, that immovable rock. With the guidance of our Sages, we can always be a beacon to the others who have been made to live in the darkness for so long.

Yerushalayim Harim Saviv La ... "Jerusalem is surrounded by mountains, and Hashem is around His people, from now forever."

Just as the mountains around the Holy City give us the physical understanding of protection, so too, in the realm of the spiritual, Hashem's presence can be seen around his children. It is this protection that has allowed us to show our faithfulness despite all adversity.

Ki Lo Yanuach Sheivet ... "For the rod of wickedness shall never come to rest upon the lot of the righteous; therefore the righteous need not lay their hands upon violence."

There may be times when the wicked seem to be overcoming us. But we need never answer in kind,

rather in the spiritual battle for our souls, we must be consistent and loyal to our Torah dictates.

Heitiva Hashem Latovim ..."Do good, Hashem, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts."

We ask that what the world sees should be seen as good, so that the righteous remnant of His children can create greater *kiddush Hashem*.

When others see the good that prevails in a Torah life, they cannot but help want to feel part of that goodness, and this, this is ours to give them.

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